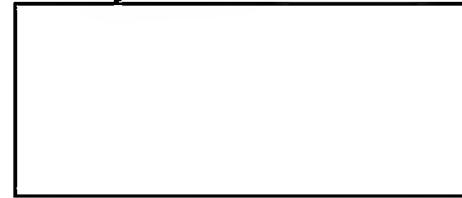


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3 December 1973

State Department review completed

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AUSTRALIA-CAMBODIA: Canberra may be edging toward  
recognition of Sihanouk.

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**Next 14 Page(s) In Document Exempt**

AUSTRALIA-CAMBODIA: CANBERRA MAY BE EDGING TOWARD RECOGNIZING THE SIHANOUK "GOVERNMENT."

THE US AMBASSADOR IN CANBERRA BELIEVES THAT PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WILL TAKE THIS STEP IF THE SIHANOUK GOVERNMENT IS ADMITTED TO THE UN DURING THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. WHITLAM'S THINKING APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SPURRED IN PART BY A FEELING THAT THE US, IN LETTING SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES AND JAPAN TAKE THE LEAD IN DEFENDING THE LON NOL REGIME IN THE UN, HAS SIGNALLED A LESSENING OF SUPPORT FOR PHNOM PENH.

AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT, BUT DOUBTS ABOUT ITS FUTURE HAVE LED TO A COOLING OF RELATIONS IN RECENT MONTHS. LAST SUMMER CANBERRA STALLED FOR OVER A MONTH BEFORE ACCEPTING THE CREDENTIALS OF PHNOM PENH'S NEW AMBASSADOR. WHITLAM ANNOUNCED LAST MONTH THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD WITHDRAW AT THE END OF THIS YEAR FROM THE INTERNATIONALLY SPONSORED CAMBODIAN EXCHANGE SUPPORT FUND, WHICH HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENT TO US-FINANCED IMPORT PROGRAMS.

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## FOR THE RECORD\*

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South Vietnam: Communist rocket fire destroyed the Shell petroleum depot southeast of Saigon yesterday. Most of the 600,000 barrels of POL stored there were destined for civilian use, but some was diesel fuel stored for the South Vietnamese armed forces and aviation fuel earmarked for Cambodia. [redacted]

[redacted] about half the country's POL handling capacity has been destroyed, and that the tank farm will be out of operation for at least a year. [redacted]

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\*These items were prepared by CIA without consultation with the Departments of State and Defense.

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